

## CAPTAINS CAREER COURSE: LEVERAGING TALENTED OFFICERS TOWARDS THE ARMY PROFESSION

BY

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# USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## **CAPTAINS CAREER COURSE: LEVERAGING TALENTED OFFICERS TOWARDS THE ARMY PROFESSION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The Army Captain's Career Course (CCC) is the second developmental course attended by officers following their commissioning. Generally, officers attend the course immediately after promotion to Captain and between their 4th and 7th years of service. Attendance to the CCC also requires the completion of a related distance learning (dL) Captains Career Common Core Course (C5) that both Active Army (AA) and Reserve Component (RC) officers complete either before or during the CCC. Given the CCC's pivotal timing and role in the career progression of the officer corps, it is under continual scrutiny and revision. As such, the Army struggles to improve the course to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by Information Technology (IT) enabled dL approaches. While pursuing improvements it must also respond to the demands dictated by war and a rapidly changing organizational and operational environment. This paper examines the critical role the CCC has in the professional development, performance and retention of talented officers and recommends several modifications to improve its design and conduct. It concludes that the CCC is a critical factor in retaining talented

officers within the profession and is instrumental in both their development and successful performance in a challenging operational environment.



## CAPTAINS CAREER COURSE: LEVERAGING TALENTED OFFICERS TOWARDS THE ARMY PROFESSION

The U.S. Army's competitive advantage directly relates to its capacity to learn faster and adapt more quickly than its adversaries...the Army cannot risk failure through complacency, lack of imagination, or resistance to change...The Army must take immediate action to develop a capacity for accelerated learning that extends from organizational levels of learning to the individual Soldier whose knowledge, skills, and abilities are tested in the most unforgiving environments.

—TRADOC PAM 525-8-2  
The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015

Within the Army the educational development of commissioned officers is provided by a combination of military schooling and attendance at civilian institutions. Junior officers attend the Basic Officer Leader Course immediately upon commissioning and then, following their first tour of duty, attend the branch Captains Career Course. Later in their careers, advanced military and leader development of mid-level and senior officers consists of Intermediate Level Education (ILE), Command and Staff College (CSC), and Senior Service College (SSC) military schooling.<sup>1</sup> Generally, Active Army (AA) commissioned officers leave their unit of assignment in a permanent change of station (PCS) status to attend a 20-21 week Captain's Career Course (CCC) immediately after promotion to Captain and after their 4<sup>th</sup> but before their 7<sup>th</sup> year of service. Attendance to the CCC also requires the completion of a related distance learning (dL) Captains Career Common Core Course (C5) that both the Active Army (AA) and Reserve Component (RC) officers complete either before or during the CCC.<sup>2</sup> This paper outlines the current CCC programs; examines the critical role the CCC has in the professional development, performance and retention of talented officers; assesses the recent efforts to modify the duration, format and content of the course;

and finally recommends several modifications to improve its design and conduct of the CCC.

#### Current CCC Program

Army Regulation 350-1 published in December 2009 covers Army Training and Leader Development. The regulation describes the purpose of the CCC: “The Captains Career Course (CCC) provides captains with the tactical, technical and leader knowledge and skills needed to lead company-size units and serve on battalion and brigade staffs” and develops leaders through the integration of institutional training with the recent operational experiences of the students.<sup>3</sup> The CCC is a requirement for both Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) officers who attend an AC or RC version of the course. All AC officers attend the CCC in a PCS status with the exception of the MEDCOM CCC which is TDY.<sup>4</sup>

The standard length for the CCC AC course is 20-21 weeks and most all are resident programs with a few CCCs conducted via Mobile Training Teams due to the infrequency of resident class starts and the amount of required Small Group Leaders. This design was approved in 2004 by the TRADOC Commander and the Chief of Staff Army (CSA). The new design included PCS, TDY, or TCS attendance options that were to conclude with a Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3)-based Combined Arms Exercise (CAX).<sup>5</sup> However, the U.S. Army was forced to eliminate multiple status attendance options for the active component because it could not get approval from the Department of Defense to modify the Joint Federal Travel Regulation (JFTR).<sup>6</sup> The failure to secure approval to modify the JTR also precluded more RC students from attending using their Active Duty for Training (ADT) allowance. Notwithstanding, the Army completed full implementation of the AC CCC by the 3rd quarter of FY 2006.

However, it took until 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2009 before the RC CCC was fully operational.<sup>7</sup> The current CCC has been evolving ever since. Importantly, the TRADOC Commander directed a complete redesign of the CCC on 30 January 2009, and directed it be formulated within 90 days.<sup>8</sup> However, faced with a need to provide a conceptual framework for this and other needed leader development reforms, the TRADOC CCC redesign effort slowed considerably while effort shifted to developing and publishing the Army leader development policies and regulations.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the 15 CCC programs currently in existence still generally conform to their original 2006 design.

Of the 15 courses, excluding the AMEDD CCC, two CCCs exceeded the standard 20-21 weeks duration (Air Defense at 24 weeks and JAG Officer at 42 weeks) and each course has a separate RC CCC except for the JAG course. The AC CCC programs for Armor, Infantry, Aviation, Chemical, Military Intelligence, Military Police, Engineer, Ordnance, Transportation, Quartermaster, Field Artillery, and Signal branches had a combined total of 3050 graduates in FY10 as per the Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS) statistics.<sup>10</sup> Of these graduates, 191 were RC Soldiers, accounting for 6.3% of the 3050 AC CCC graduate population. Concurrently, the RC CCC graduated 1222 students from equivalent branch courses. The ATRRS results reveal that of the 1413 total RC who graduated in FY10, only 1.35% of them graduated from AC courses.<sup>11</sup>

Under The Army School System (TASS) the RC officers attend CCC as scheduled by their unit. The TASS RC CCC is a 13-month model which has a Phase-II and a Phase-IV Distance Learning components and a Phase-III and Phase-V Branch Resident components, with the two resident programs lasting two weeks each and with

both completed in a TDY status.<sup>12</sup> Army Reserve CCC students face significant challenges completing Distance Learning (dL) which is used as an enabler to offset resident attendance in the traditional brick-and-mortar PCS course. Distance learning programs are not on par with resident programs mainly due to a lack of standardized platforms and limited bandwidth connectivity that constrain interaction of students/faculty to just basic chat-room collaboration. Additionally, AC CCCs have not been resourced to collaborate and correspond with distance learning students. This does not provide for timely instructor-to-student or peer-to-peer interaction and collaboration. However, the RC National Guard or Army Reserve students whose units' pay for the PCS may attend the AC resident course if they are able to obtain an allocation through the quota manager and are entered into the Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS).<sup>13</sup>

While the RC CCC strives for the same learning outcomes as the AC CCC, it does not facilitate the same dynamic learning environment: RC students do not interact with their AC counterparts or achieve the same cross-cultural exposure given the near absence of International Military Students (IMS). However well-meaning the TASS concept, it is severely limited by the abbreviated four weeks of in-class resident time and approximately 300 hours of distance learning spread over 13 months. Consequently, the RC students have limited peer-to-peer social learning and virtually no academic exchanges and shared perspectives with their active component counterparts. Furthermore, the RC students do not experience the same cultural interactions with International Military Students (IMS).

### Critical Role of the Captains Career Course

The CCC occurs during a pivotal time in the officers' career.<sup>14</sup> The officers have usually completed their first tour and performed duties as a platoon leader, company executive officer and possibly as a junior staff officer at the battalion level.<sup>15</sup> Although leading and training a unit of up to 35 soldiers is a significant responsibility for a relatively junior executive, it pales in comparison with the challenges associated with company command and principal staff officer responsibilities that will follow promotion to captain.

Correspondingly, the CCC prepares officers to command and manage company-level units and perform in key staff positions on battalion and brigade staffs.<sup>16</sup> For the first time these officers will assume a wide range of new authorities and responsibilities: as commanders they will exercise non-judicial authority to enforce discipline; they have responsibilities to supervise, develop and cull other commissioned officers; they will have to train, manage and employ both operational and support elements in the conduct of complex operations; they oversee and manage supply and maintenance activities in the field and garrison; and they conduct many other challenging administrative and management tasks. On the average, a career officer will spend more time as a captain than any other rank.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, the success of these junior officers to perform across this range of organizational requirements is a critical factor in the continuation of their careers as members of the profession of arms. This is particularly important since the largest exodus of talented/high potential officers occurs between 4-5 years of service.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the Army's high operations tempo and related personnel manning policies have magnified these losses so that the current experience base for all captains has

declined to historic lows.<sup>19</sup> For instance, the population of captains with 4 or less years of service has increased from just 8 percent in 1991 to 30 percent in 2009.<sup>20</sup>

Importantly, once these junior officers commit to continued service beyond the 10-year time in service point, the vast majority of officers (over 80%) continue service until retirement.<sup>21</sup> The challenge the Army is facing is retaining talented junior officers beyond their initial Active Duty Service Obligation (3-5 years of service) until that critical 10-year career point.<sup>22</sup> A relevant, challenging, and intellectual stimulating CCC postures junior officer graduates for success as company commanders and principal staff officers and could also provide an overwhelmingly positive educational experience that could stimulate their intellectual development and reinforce their confidence in the Army developmental programs.

Given the CCC's pivotal timing and role in the career progression of the officer corps, it is under continual scrutiny and revision. As such, the Army struggles to improve the course to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by Information Technology (IT) enabled dL approaches. Concurrently, the Army must also adapt to the education requirements dictated by the overseas contingency operations and a rapidly changing organizational and operational environment.

As part of the goal to stabilize and balance the operations tempo of the Army and prepare for the long term strategic and operational demands of persistent conflict, the Army published a series of strategic documents outlining CCC-relevant conceptual frameworks and related guidance. These included: the Army Capstone Concept, the Army Leader Development Strategy, the Army Training Strategy, and the Army Learning Concept (ALC) 2015. Significantly, the Army Learning Concept (ALC) 2015

calls for a transformation of the Army's learning model and provides a vision of the CCC for 2015.<sup>23</sup>

### The Changing Operational and Strategic Environment

The U.S. Army's recent operational experiences identify major trends relevant to the Army's officer development and education that are captured in both the Army's Capstone Concept (ACC), with its major focus on operational adaptability, and with the recently published Army Learning Concept for 2015. Both documents provide a vision of the future environment that requires leaders at all levels to be comfortable with ambiguity, exercise critical and creative thinking in dynamic and rapidly evolving operational environments, and be capable of making sound decisions considering strategic, operational, and tactical consequences. In other words, our educational approach must move beyond the transfer of technical information and knowledge and focus on educating for judgment. Notwithstanding that innovations in information technology enable the rapid acquisition and sharing of task and mission related information and facilitate learner-pulled technical training and education, they do not facilitate or enable "education for judgment."<sup>24</sup> Generally, this must be gained either through the "school of hard knocks" by personal experience or through Socratic or active learning methodologies in small group settings.<sup>25</sup> Both means of acquiring wisdom and judgment require intense commitments of time and resources.

### The Captains Career Course 2015: Moving Forward or Backwards?

Concurrent with the development and publication of ALC 2015, the Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) established a commission to study the Army's 15 different Captain's Career Courses (CCC) and evaluate the content of their curricula and delivery methods.<sup>26</sup> The study uncovered several systemic deficiencies with the

conduct of the 15 CCCs with only about one third of the courses achieving what the commission termed as academic excellence.<sup>27</sup>

The 2010 Captain's Career Course Study conducted a comprehensive assessment of 15 Army Active Component (AC) CCCs including an examination of their facilities, governance, staff and faculty and students. The study team surveyed 620 CCC students and solicited input through focus groups of students and faculty.<sup>28</sup> The team used the three requirements specified from the AR 350-1 that directs the courses "to develop leaders who are: 1) tactically and technically competent in Full Spectrum Operations (FSO); 2) able to serve on battalion and/or brigade staffs; and 3) able to lead company sized units."<sup>29</sup> The study did not use the ALC 2015 in its assessment of the CCCs since it was still in draft, but did describe the CCC redesign that had been proposed as a result of the draft ALC 2015. Overall, the study revealed several broad findings and conclusions: the CCCs are better off than believed in light of limited resources and existing OPTEMPO generated turbulence; there is a need for increased CCC governance; the current CCC PCS and classroom environment that exposes students to diverse peer backgrounds and experiences is essential to accomplishing the CCC education mission; most classrooms need technology modernization; students need time to reflect and reset with self and family during the course; CCCs are developing tactically and technically competent officers with most CCCs placing less importance on battalion and/or brigade staff skills; and most all CCCs place the least importance on developing company commander skills.<sup>30</sup>



More specifically, the study produced 47 findings and 71 recommendations. Many of the findings directly address the course requirements mandated in AR 350-1. These included:

1. Since CCC is the last branch technical training for most officers, it must be resourced and the existing 20-21 week course duration protected in order to adequately train and educate these junior officers. Over the years the Advance Courses'/CCCs' duration have declined while mission driven training and education requirements have increased.<sup>31</sup>
2. CCCs uniformly fail to prepare captains with communicative skills required in order to work on battalion and/or brigade staffs. Additionally, since joint assignments are now being filled at the captain level, schools should increase the importance it places on communicative arts and seek resourcing for formal communicative arts programs.<sup>32</sup>
3. CCCs marginally prepare captains for duties as a company commander. Since much of the command subject matter is typically installation-focused, it could be better taught by installations with captains in a TDY status. However, CCCs should, as time allows, teach or reinforce related topics using self-directed learning where possible.<sup>33</sup>
4. Adult learning and education suffers from too much powerpoint/lectures. CCCs should continue to evolve curriculums away from powerpoint lecture format to learner centric exercises that develop complex problem solving skills.<sup>34</sup>

5. Four of the fifteen schools allow students to complete a master degree during their CCC while in PCS status through coordination with HRC. Schools that offer this should continue and TRADOC should explore ways to expand this opportunity across all branch schools.<sup>35</sup>
6. Nine CCCs provide professional certification and/or Additional Skill Identifier (ASI) opportunities as part of branch technical training. This technical training removes the burden from gaining commanders and saves the Army future costs.<sup>36</sup>
7. The study recommends maintaining CCC as a PCS course and encourages the Commandants, CAC and TRADOC to support both the PCS costs and the commitment of resources necessary to continue the current duration of the course. Note: of the 620 students surveyed, 70% favored a PCS course over dL and Temporary Duty (TDY) hybrids.<sup>37</sup>

The breadth and diversity of the findings of the study is remarkable and provides insights into the wide-ranging curriculum requirements and educational challenges faced by the diverse captain population. Clearly, improvements and modernization efforts will have to be decentralized to the schools and centers to efficiently and effectively implement the study's findings and recommendations and address the disparate branch educational requirements. Changes and reforms will likely have to be specifically tailored by the responsible schools and centers to address the deficiencies within the context of their specific CCC. Therefore, while many of the recommendations require higher headquarters analysis, policy guidance, and changed or increased resourcing, the specific change management approach will likely be left to the schools

and centers for decentralized implementation.<sup>38</sup> What is also of primary concern is how the new ALC 2015 educational framework will affect the current CCC course construct and/or address the findings and recommendations of the above referenced study.

#### The CCC and the U.S. Army Learning Concept For 2015

The ALC 2015 outlines a “learner-centric” model that optimizes student physical attendance in schoolhouses (such as resident instruction in CCCs) by improving both the substance of the curriculum and delivery methods.<sup>39</sup> Concurrently, the concept calls for the development and employment of a ‘digitized learning environment’ to enable career-long learning that seamlessly spans across institutional, operational and self-development learning/educational domains.<sup>40</sup> Significantly, Appendix E Career Span Implications provides a vision for where the CCC Course should progress by 2015:

By 2015, CCC is envisioned to be a more tailored, modular learning approach completed over time, with a mix of resident and non-resident gated learning events that include both standardized and tailored learning modules. This may include face-to-face common core instruction taught at installation regional learning centers and branch technical/tactical resident module. Newly promoted captains, in coordination with their chain of command, can use the Army Career Tracker to develop a sequence of mandatory and elective learning modules that, along with operational experiences, would be completed to pass established career gates in preparation for position assignments. Tailored learning modules would include some self-paced, structured self-development combined with networked links to other students and branch school facilitators in a blended learning approach. A student cohort group will be established and mentored by a facilitator from the branch school who encourages peer-to-peer learning, collaboration, problem solving, and social networking.

Common core leader development modules are envisioned to be conducted in a cross-branch, face-to-face setting at the regional learning center by on-site faculty, mobile training teams, networked links to schoolhouse, or a combination of methods depending on location throughput....<sup>41</sup>

As alluded to in the above vision, there are several proposed modifications to the CCC that may not resolve the deficiencies outlined in the 2010 study and, in fact, may aggravate existing problems or even create new challenges. Conversely, the proposed CCC 2015 may help reduce some of the personnel turbulence inherent with the current 20-21 week PCS course and increase the available manpower by reducing the duration of absences by attendees away from units and organizations. Some areas of concern over the proposed CCC 2015 concept were directly addressed in the CCC 2010 Study.

The CCC 2015 proposed a significantly shorter course than the current 20-21 week CCC. The proposed CCC 2015 is projected to have a 6-8 week resident Common Core (CC) taught at Regional Learning Center (RLC) sites and a 4-6 week branch technical phase taught at branch school sites.<sup>42</sup> The CCC 2015, as described in the Army Learning Concept 2015, will only allow AC Soldiers to attend the resident CC and Branch Technical phases.<sup>43</sup> The current Army CCC allows Commandants 13.5 weeks for training and educating branch technical skills, which will be reduced by 7.5 weeks under the proposed concept.<sup>44</sup> “All lost some time they previously used to educate Officers on branch-specific tactical and technical skills. Schools no longer have the luxury of focusing their students on obtaining mastery in these skills but instead must settle for proficiency and/or familiarization due to the lack of time for repetitive training and education.”<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, “Commandants, Directors of Training (DoTs), and SGLs expressed concern that transition to a dL model would affect Military Personnel Exchange Program (MPEP) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs, and current agreements with the training of Sister Service Officers.”<sup>46</sup>

Also, Commandants and DoTs expressed doubt that countries would continue sending International Military Students (IMS) to the United States for a shortened course.<sup>47</sup>

The CCC Concept 2015 also fails to accommodate the dramatically different requirements of the 15 branch CCCs for teaching tactical and technical competencies. The CCC 2015 will significantly affect the schools' and centers' abilities to generate qualified leaders given the potential loss of the 7.5 weeks of critical branch technical training and education. The 2010 study warns that "[e]ven the current amount of time allocated for branch technical training may not be sufficient for specific Officers based on their background assignments and operational experiences. Branch detailed Officers have extremely limited background and experience in their basic branch of assignment."<sup>48</sup> The Military Intelligence (MI), Air Defense, and Signal CCCs are good examples of this. Sixty-two percent of MI CCC students are branch detailed without any prior MI experience or training.<sup>49</sup> "Reducing the amount of time allocated for branch technical training would significantly impact the ability of the CCC to produce technically competent Officers."<sup>50</sup>

The CCC 2015 does not allow the attendance of significant numbers of US Army Reserve (USAR) and Army National Guard (ARNG) students with Active Component (AC) students in the CCC learning environment. As a result, the CCC does not capitalize on the integration of RC-mobilization and operational reserve lessons learned or USAR and ARNG unique citizen-soldier perspectives of conflicting civilian employment issues. Students would normally exchange these experiences via the Small Group (SG) settings through vicarious and verbal persuasion dynamics.<sup>51</sup> Failing to integrate Army National Guard (ARNG) students with Active Component (AC) and US

Army Reserve (USAR) students also prevents National Guard students from learning or interacting with International Military Students (IMS), and thus limits opportunities for cultural development and growth. The above enumerated concerns are being researched by the Combined Arms Center, to include using blogs to solicit comments from the field.

LTG Caslen, the U.S. Army's Combined Arms Center Commander, posted a blog on March 15, 2010 describing needed changes to the Army Captain's Career Course (CCC). The blog is not considered statistically valid or reliable for the purpose of supporting change; however, it does provide anecdotal evidence in the form of comments by some CAC experts in the fields of officer education and quality assurance. In his blog, LTG Caslen states:

With the publication of the Army Capstone Concept, Army Leader Development Strategy, increased resource demands, and the availability of improved learning technologies, we must relook the delivery of the entire Captain's Career Course. Many of our captains are commanding without the Captain's Career Course, many attend the course without their families (contributing to additional separation), and current PCS policy creates two moves within one year -- the culmination of these facts require us to reexamine the entire course.<sup>52</sup>

LTG Caslen's BLOG raises several issues that may provide the underlying rationale that is driving the modifications proposed with CCC 2015. Resolving issues with the status of student attendance as accompanied or unaccompanied, having command experience prior to attendance, or students incurring two PCS moves within a year does not necessary lead to improvements in the captains' education or in the delivery of the CCCs. Conversely, the ALC 2015 states "The problem this concept addresses can be stated as a question: How must the Army change its learning model from one that barely satisfies today's needs to one that promotes operational

adaptability, engages learners, enables the Army to outpace adversaries, and meets the Army's learning requirements in 2015?"<sup>53</sup> The difference in how the problem is framed is profound. One implies a transformation of the education and development approach to exploit emerging IT methods and respond to dramatic changes in the operational environment. The other justifies the change based upon the attendance at the CCC by captains as aggravating the Army's high level of OPTEMPO. In other words, the reduced time and resources embodied in the proposed CCC 2015 will be a bill-payer for increased officer availability in units and reduced overall officer turbulence. If, as the comprehensive CCC 2010 study revealed, the center of gravity for "education" is interaction with peers and faculty in a small group setting, then truncating this activity and significantly constraining the diversity of the participants would have a deleterious overall impact on CCC education.<sup>54</sup> Also, if officers must meet the education demands through increased dL activity while they are also performing duties in their assigned jobs, it will likely just pass the OPTEMPO from the institution to the individual and obscure it, rather than eliminate or reduce it. Similar to the survey results of the CCC 2010 Study effort, the CAC Commander's CCC 2015 blog supports the PCS course over any TDY alternative by a favorability rating of 72%.<sup>55</sup>

#### Improving CCC and Increasing the Retention of Talented Officers

The Army brings in too many lieutenants and retains too few captains.<sup>56</sup> The current high Army operations tempo, excessive accessions of lieutenants to compensate for the high loss rate of captains, modularity driven increases in Major/O4 authorizations causing those positions to be filled by captains, and shortening of time-in-grade requirements for promotion to captain have all negatively impacted the professional development of these junior officers.<sup>57</sup> Significantly, the combination of

these factors have caused lieutenants to miss out on key developmental assignments or significantly truncated the duration of those assignments.<sup>58</sup> For instance, in 2001, lieutenants served an average of 15 months as platoon leaders; however, by 2006 that number had decreased to less than 11 months.<sup>59</sup> The net effect was that the lieutenants were being promoted to captain much earlier and also, because of the high density of lieutenants, they had served much less time in key developmental assignments.<sup>60</sup> This has important implications for the CCC since those newly promoted captains that attend the course are relatively younger with less experience in developmental positions.<sup>61</sup>

The cascading effect of Lieutenants serving as Captains and Captains serving as Majors also adversely affects officer professional development by thrusting officers into positions that they have not been adequately prepared and may subsequently attend schooling and receive education for assignments they have already performed.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, with an under-resourced Transient, Trainees, Holders and Students (TTHS) individuals' account, which is designed to resource and accommodate professional development assignments across the force, the losing units cannot afford to assign officers to developmental positions because it creates a vacancy and lowers readiness.<sup>63</sup> Thus, attendance is sometimes deferred or constructive credit awarded and important developmental education missed. This is especially important as our educational programs transition from instructing on technical and tactical topics vice educating to improve judgment, wisdom and adaptability. The latter just cannot be made up by dL or substitute experiences alone. A fully resourced TTHS account automatically compensates for any assignment conflicts including those generated by



the ARFORGEN model. A resourced TTHS account is a critically important professional development resourcing enabler.

Retaining talented officers beyond the 5-year mark (seasoned captains) is a growing challenge for the Army.<sup>64</sup> The Army makes a significant investment in every officer it recruits. On average, the Army pays \$200,000 for each officer it accesses from its three commissioning sources: the U.S. Army Military Academy (USMA), the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and the Officer Candidate School (OCS).<sup>65</sup> What is essential for the profession is to maximize the Army's investment by retaining the most qualified officers. Providing a CCC that is rigorous, intellectually stimulating, relevant, and fully resourced in course duration, quality instructors and modern delivery methods is an important enabler for retaining quality officers. A quality CCC education could be decisive in convincing quality officers who would otherwise depart the military to continue service. Likewise, the Army could focus on retaining officers with talent; as opposed to just retaining as many officers as it can and sending all that remains on to the CCC. Instead, human resource managers should seek to retain those talented officers that are planning to depart the Army based on specific retention criteria and correspondingly allow those who fall at or below the lower quartile to depart, if they so desire.

Correspondingly, human resource managers have the opportunity to make an assessment of the quality of captains before they attend the CCC based upon the captains' performance in key developmental assignments, during pre-commissioning schooling and during BOLC. Officers who are in the highest quartile could be offered waivers for any additional ADSO accrued as a consequence of the PCS and CCC

attendance. The intent would be to have them spend the final year of their ROTC scholarship or USMA ADSO, without accruing any additional commitment, attending a premier professional development experience that could, in turn, be a deciding factor influencing them to continue in the profession. This incentive would be similar to the Officer Career Satisfaction Program (OCSP) in that it would specifically target the most talented officers and those at risk of resigning.<sup>66</sup> Conversely, faced with a CCC program and experience that requires students to both perform demanding duties in their organizations AND complete a broad array of dL modules and short courses in a TDY status, is likely to discourage talented officers who have viable alternative career potential in the private sector and actually increase attrition of this important group.

A related innovative approach that could enable this sort of HR management is being pursued by the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence (MSCoE) at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. MSCoE is currently supporting the Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis to pilot the Army “Green Pages” which will attempt to connect officer career talents, education, assignments, and deployments, with Army personnel requirements.<sup>67</sup> This exciting initiative will change Army talent management by putting sellers and buyers in direct communication with each other. It will also enable individual officers to share lessons and experiences that enhance choices that are more conducive to individual career plans. Getting the talent employment piece right in a “competitive labor market and an uncertain operating environment” is essential to retention and future accessions.<sup>68</sup> Maintaining visibility of the unique skills and talents of each individual officer and understanding an officer’s career aspirations are areas that would benefit the Army as a whole and the management of captains attending the CCC in

particular.<sup>69</sup> The ultimate outcome is a refined system that enables individual officers to have more influence over their future and their own professional development.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The Captains Career Course occurs at a pivotal time in an officers' career. A well designed, challenging, intellectually stimulating and relevant course can substantially enable graduates to perform at the high levels demanded of the current and future operational environments. Moreover, attendance at quality CCCs can inspire talented officers to continue service and help reduce the current high level of attrition of these key personnel. Thus, the Army should create and exploit a viable and relevant CCC program and incentivize attendance by talented officers by allowing them to attend without accruing additional ADSO. Their participation would raise the level of discourse within the peer-centric CCC learning environment and may also inspire their continued service.

TRADOC and CAC empowered a commission to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of CCC programs. The Commission attributed many of the problems in the quality of education to the high Army overall operations tempo coupled with the corresponding limited manpower and a paucity of resources within the generating force. The study surfaced 47 findings and provided 71 recommendations that can be summarized with two major recommended improvements: (1) provide the best and brightest small group leaders (SGL); and (2) develop and use current, rigorous and relevant curriculum.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, focus groups and surveys revealed that CCC students and faculty believed that education would be most advanced through a small group facilitated interaction approach.<sup>71</sup> That is, by facilitating small groups of students in an

academic environment that allowed for open dialog, reflection, intellectual challenges and exchanges of diverse operational experiences and perspectives.<sup>72</sup>

Correspondingly, the Army Learning Concept 2015 describes a realistic future operational and strategic environment that demands a learning model that essentially educates for adaptability and judgment while exploiting dL and IT innovations by the faculty and students. Unfortunately, education for judgment and adaptability requires more small-group classroom time, not less. To accomplish this, the Army should ensure that classroom time is devoted primarily to education for judgment/adaptability activities while technical and tactical knowledge is instructed with dL or web-based means. Moreover, the Army must fully resource CCC attendance through sufficient TTHS manpower spaces, PCS funding and needed course duration, which could include an increase in the length of the course in excess of the current 21 weeks. Additionally, the Army should continue to increase RC attendance at AA CCC courses and search for methods to improve the conduct of their associated RC CCC programs to better address education for judgment and adaptability learning requirements.

Finally, it appears that the Army is setting a course for CCC 2015 that will truncate the CCC programs, reduce in-class time and eliminate the PCS authorization. This paper warns of possible severe unintended consequences as the burden of instruction is shifted onto the backs of officers already fully engaged in performing their assigned duties within the force. As with our talented officers who ‘vote with their feet’ following completion of their ADSO, so will many of our junior officers when confronted with yet another ‘unfunded mandate.’

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Army, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, Pamphlet 600-3 (U.S. Department of the Army: Washington D.C., 1 February 2010), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 27. Note that RC CCC parameters differ from those of the AA CCC program. RC officers can enroll in the RC CCC upon completion of Basic Officer Leader Course III and promotion to first lieutenant and prior to completing 8 years of service. Currently, the RC CCC consists of a 13-month program including C5, two 15-day resident periods, and 11-months of specific dL phases.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Army, *Army Training and Leader Development*, Army Regulation 350-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, December 18, 2009), 70.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> William M. Raymond, Special Commission of The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Report of Findings and Recommendations 2010, U.S. Army Captains Career Course Study, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combined Arms Center, June 14, 2010), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Army, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, TRADOC PAM 525-8-2 (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Department of the Army, September 14, 2010), 1.

<sup>10</sup> The Army Training Requirements and Resources System, <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/portals/stats/atrrwr0r4r8r9.aspx> (Accessed October 10, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Army, *Army Training and Leader Development*, 70.

<sup>13</sup> The Army Training Requirements and Resources System.

<sup>14</sup> William M. Raymond, et al., "The Criticality of Captain's Education Now and in the Future.", *Military Review*, (November-December 2010): 52,57.

<sup>15</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., *Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent*, (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, January 2010): Vol. 3, 13.

<sup>16</sup> William M. Raymond, Special Commission of The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Report of Findings and Recommendations, 12.

<sup>17</sup> William M. Raymond, et al., 52.

<sup>18</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., *Retaining Talent*, 5,12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Army, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, TRADOC PAM 525-8-2 (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Department of the Army, September 14, 2010), i,1.

<sup>24</sup> C. Roland Christensen, David A. Garvin, and Ann Sweet, eds., *Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1991), 3-13.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> William M. Raymond, Special Commission of The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Report of Findings and Recommendations 2010, i,ii.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., i,ii.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., ii,37.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of Army, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, 17.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., ii.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>42</sup> William M. Raymond, Special Commission of The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Report of Findings and Recommendations 2010, 77.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 10-12,21.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> RAND Annual Report 2008, *Are Today's Forces Maintaining Proficiency in the Skills Needed for Major Combat Operations?*, [http://www.rand.org/pubs/annual\\_reports/2009/RAND\\_AR7134.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/annual_reports/2009/RAND_AR7134.pdf) (Accessed October 3, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> Vicarious learning occurs by watching another individual perform the same task an individual is yet to perform; Verbal persuasion is when a person learns through being convinced by another person with the rationale for performing a task a certain way.

<sup>52</sup> Robert L. Caslen Jr., *Combined Arms Center Blog* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center Commander), <http://usacac.army.mil/blog/blogs/frontier6/archive/2010/03/15/captain-career-course-proposed-concept.aspx> (Accessed October 4, 2010).

<sup>53</sup> *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, 11.

<sup>54</sup> William M. Raymond, Special Commission of The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Report of Findings and Recommendations 2010, 1-3,3,22,30-31,57,60-61,75.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., ii.

<sup>56</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 7.

<sup>57</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 3, 6-7,15.; Casey Wardynski, et al., Accessing Talent: The Foundation of a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy, (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2010): Vol. 4, 10,13-14.

<sup>58</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 7,56.

<sup>59</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 6.; Casey Wardynski, et al., Accessing Talent, 14.

<sup>60</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 6-7.

<sup>61</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 15; Casey Wardynski, et al., Accessing Talent, 14-15.

<sup>62</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Accessing Talent, 14.

<sup>63</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Developing Talent, (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2010): Vol. 5, 6-8.

<sup>64</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 3,5.

<sup>65</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Accessing Talent, 4,9.

<sup>66</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Retaining Talent, 27,31.

<sup>67</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Employing Talent, (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, May 2010): Vol. 6, 17.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., v,3.

<sup>69</sup> Casey Wardynski, et al., Employing Talent, vii-viii.

<sup>70</sup> William M. Raymond, et al., 74-75.

<sup>71</sup> William M. Raymond, Special Commission of The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Report of Findings and Recommendations 2010, i.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 8,61.